

WASHINGTON, DC -- The House of Representatives today passed legislation authored by Congresswoman Linda Sánchez (D-Lakewood) which will help protect millions of children online. H.R. 4134, the Internet Crime Prevention Education Program Act, authorizes funding to continue the successful i-Safe program, which has provided online safety education for over 3 million children in all 50 states. The bill also provides for a competitive grant program to fund additional internet crime prevention efforts.

“Kids today face dangers online that many of us find hard to imagine -- from gangs, predators, bullies, and thieves to sexual solicitations, harassment, and invasions of their privacy,” said Congresswoman Sánchez. “If kids cannot take advantage of all the wonderful benefits that the Internet has to offer because of predators, bullies, and scam artists, then they are being robbed of an opportunity to learn and grow. I introduced the Internet Crime Prevention Education Program Act because we cannot let the information super-highway become the information super-nightmare.”

The i-Safe program provides age-specific lesson plans for teachers to use in the classroom, from kindergarten through the 12th grade. As children get older, the message adapts. Early on, with the help of a cartoon character named “i-buddy,” kids learn how to be a good citizen on the internet -- learning proper etiquette in communicating with others while also maintaining privacy. As children get older, they are taught more about sexual predators, cyber-bullying, piracy, and financial scams.

This bill is one component of Rep. Sanchez' Safe Kids Initiative -- a series of bills designed to protect children from bullying, harassment, gang activity, and other forms of violence, and to keep them safe and in school. The Internet Crime Prevention Education Program Act is the first bill in the Safe Kids Initiative that the full House has passed this year.